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ABSTRACT

Cultural anthropology's methods of "emic" and "etic" analysis have potential applications in the theory, research, and practice of educational administration. In "emic" analysis the native informant is made the ultimate judge of the researcher's descriptions and analyses. In "etic" analysis, however, the observer-researcher becomes the ultimate judge of the accuracy of the constructs and concepts employed. Anthropologists use both emic and etic approaches in describing such cultural practices as bovicide in India. The same techniques can be used by educational administrators in their everyday activities--in handling student disruptions, for instance. In educational administration research, emic and etic analysis can assist in both data gathering and theory building. An interviewer using the technique will be aware of the different kinds of observer-informant relationships and of the different ways a question can be asked or answered. By definition, theorists in educational administration use the etic approach, but their awareness of the varieties of emic and etic data can improve their analysis. (Author/PW)

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Emic and Etic Analysis in Educational Administration

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Emic and Etic Analysis
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This paper is an interdisciplinary attempt to associate the fields of anthropology and educational administration using an emic and etic approach. Emic and etic perspectives may have the potential for providing a conceptual framework for cross checking, analyzing and generalizing data (Harris, 1979) particularly as it relates to research and theory development in educational administration.

Definitions

First introduced by Kenneth Pike (1967), the emic and etic constructs provide access into the dynamics of a social system and initial points of analyses.

> Emic operations have as their hallmark the elevation of the native informant to the status of ultimate judge of the adequacy of the observer's descriptions and analyses. The test of the adequacy of emic analyses is their ability to generate statements the native accepts as real, meaningful, or appropriate. In carrying out research in the emic mode, the observer attempts to acquire a knowledge of the categories and rules one must know in order to think and act as a native.
>
> Etic operations have as their hallmark the elevation of observers to the status of ultimate judge of the categories and concepts used in descriptions and analyses. The test of the adequacy of etic accounts is simply their ability to generate scientifically productive theories about the causes of soiocultural differences and similarities. Rather than employ concepts that are necessarily real, meaningful, and appropriate from the native point of view, the observer is free to use alien categories and rules derived from the data language of science (Harris, 1979).

This framework derives the words "etic" and "emic" from the suffixes of the words phonetic and phonemic. Common across cultures, phonetics are the sounds of a language that are based upon a taxonomy of the body parts

active in the production of speech utterances and their characteristic environmental effects in the form of accoustic waves. Unlike phonemics, they do not include the cultural parts of speech such as accent or diglect. Phonemics take into consideration the sounds based on the implicit or unconscious system of sound contrasts that native speakers have inside their heads, that they employ when assigning meaning to utterances, and that they use in producing a native language. Applied in a broader sense, etic becomes an outside, external or generalized understanding that spans various cultures, emic is a native understanding particular to a specific culture (Harris, 1979).

Emic and Etic Analysis

Harris presents a case of emics and etics based on his study of farmers in the state of Kerala in Southern India. Harris interviewed farmers concerning the death of their domestic cattle. Each farmer stated firmly that he would never consciously shorten the life of his cattle by killing or starving them to death. Each farmer was firm in his belief in the standard Hindu prohibition against the slaughter of domestic bovines (cattle). Yet, when animal reproductive histories were examined, the mortality rate of male calves was twice as high as the mortality rate of female calves. It was also noted that male calves got sick more often. When farmers were asked to explain these inordinate differences, it was suggested that the males simply ate less than the females. Further questioning revealed that the male calves were restricted to much shorter feeding periods at the mothers' teats than were female calves. No farmer alluded to the fact that there was virtually no need for traction animals, resulting in males being culled and females being reared (Harris, 1979).

The emics of the situation suggest that there was no premeditated

attempt to shorten the life of any male calf. The etics of the situation suggest that cattle ratios are systematically adjusted to the need of the local ecology and economy through preferential male "bovicide." From the emic perspective, the systemic relationship between Kerala's cattle sex ratios and local ecological and economic conditions simply does not exist. The reverse of this situation was found in other cultures where "traction animals" held a higher priority (Harris, 1979).

In an anthropological sense, the emic and etic perspective utilizes an informant/field observer relationship. Other synonyms such as internal/external, native/observer, indigenous/outside observer may be used to describe this relationship. As a result, consideration is given to the fact that underlying every observer etic is a possible emic foundation. For example, if anthropologists are born and trained in the United States, then go to South America to study the Yanomamo culture, they carry the emic perspective of those raised in the United States with them. For these observers, etic objectivity becomes a matter of reducing the influence of their own emic in favor of the logic of science. The "ugly American" is probably an example of someone who employs little sensitivity for the emics of another culture and depends soley on a personal emic focus - a focus which is often unacceptable to the natives that he visits and the scientific community.

On the other hand, one might note that associated with every emic is the possibility of an etic point of view. For instance, a school administrator from Jamaica (informant) involved in a description of his educational system for an American school administrator (observer), might employ a predominantly emic perspective. However, if the Jamaican is questioned about his practices, his shared understanding with his visitor of the tenets

of science might allow him at least in part to see himself in a shared or cross-etic light. Among anthropologists, a lack of this conceptual ability might be considered an objectivity deficiency which they sometimes call "being (informant) or going (observer) native."

Everyday Life of Administrators

Instances occur when the emic and etic perspectives can be understood in terms of everyday life in school organizations. Below are a series of scenarios utilizing the emic and etic perspective in an educational administration context. The notion of emic and etic knowledge interacting in a particular individual will be highlighted in these scenarios.

The first scenario centers around a young lady who has fallen behind in her school studies. As an 11th grader, her activities and interests are not always school oriented. She decides to relieve academic pressures by using a technique called in the student subculture "fronting and turning out." To operationalize the process, she picks an area of high student density at a time of maximum traffic flow. She takes out a knife and begins screaming to others that she will cut herself ("fronting"). A crowd soon gathers around (or "turns out" for the event). She appeals to the emic and the empathic perceptions of the predominantly student crowd. The etic observer, the principal, not knowing the true emics of this charade, may release her from academic pressures in exchange for the knife. If the principal has been at the school for ten years and has seen this activity before and understands the actual emics of this act, his etic is informed through an understanding of the student emic. As he approaches her, he says, "Is that knife sharp enough? We don't have much time before the next class." The crowd, then realizes this is a charade and goes on to class. The young lady realizes

she will not gain the desired results.

If this incident had occurred at a Native American school, on an indian reservation in South Dakota, the emic of the girl threatening to injure herself might be quite different. The principal in this Native American school, in handling the incident effectively, still needs to inform his etic with information about the social meaning of the student emic. Without such understandings, the consequences of the event become more uncertain.

Emics and etics sometime help administrators understand the consequences of new ideas. For example, suppose an administrator is considering pay incentives for teachers attending summer school. Although he is familiar with the emics of the teacher subculture in general, he may "fly a trial balloon" to clarify the possible teacher emics with respect to the new idea. To put his trial balloon into operation, he locates certain talkative faculty members. He chats with these persons in the hall or in the lunchroom. As the conversation proceeds, he directs the talk to his main concern. He might say, "You know, I've been thinking about paying teachers for going to summer school. How do you think they would like that?" Once the stimulus has been set in motion, it won't take long to get a reaction from these teachers and subsequently other teachers. In this way, he determines the emic perceptions of the faculty before taking the risk incurred by actually making the decision.

Emics and etics can be used as positive community relations tools. Consider the possibility that a new superintendent has been appointed to run a rural school district. This superintendent has an urban background. Suffice it to say that, he is not fully aware of the norms and values of the community. His situation is much the same as the classic informant field-worker relationship, except for the possible language advantage. He must

depend on informants to get the emic perspective of the community.

Once he gains an emic perspective, he can then begin to administer the system. For instance, if he needs to pass a tax levy, he now has a basis of understanding the sentiments of his constituents. He may know from analysis of the local emic that this is a farming community that is not amenable to increased taxes, but one that is concerned about new farming technology that might help the yield per acre. So, he speaks to the county agricultural agent and the university's extension service to arrange to have short courses taught at the school for farmers on Saturdays. He advertises by radio during times he knows the farmers are in their tractors listening or with signs at places he knows they frequent. Farmers like the educational programs and the superintendent highlights that fact to get the tax levy passed.

The cross check potential of the emic and etic perspective is sometimes used by school boards or companies to determine if what a client says in the interview is actually how he really feels about certain situations or would react to specific board policies. The board would have access to the candidate's vita, letters of recommendation as well as an appraisal of the candidates interview responses. These factors would give the board insight into the candidates general emics and etics in relation to other candidates. However, a clever candidate could do his homework and determine the kind of candidate the board is seeking. If one's values and leadership style does not square with that of the boards, the candidate might then say what the board wants to hear, thereby projecting the desired image and/or emic. Some other candidates might give answers they think the board wants to hear indefference to the boards power. This is why the board members might want to pursue many cross checks before making their final decision. Administrators (and researchers) may also receive distorted information from an

informant for similar reasons or because they often tend attract persons on the periphery of society or an organization. These circumstances suggest caution and the need for cross checking multiple data sources, methodologies and theoretical perspectives in assessing the emics and etics of any situation.

Ethical Considerations

Emics and etics, when employed in their traditional context, are utilized in a spirit of cooperation. This may or may not be the case when these concepts are employed in an actual social setting. For example, if an administrator (or a researcher) leaves the intercom on in the teachers' lounge to intentionally and secretly gain information or emic insight, this is not only a misuse of the methodology, but most probably an ethically questionable procedure, because the teachers are unaware that they are serving as informants.

Consider the example of the school board looking for a new superintendent noted above. If the board narrowed its choices to two applicants, the board members might invite each candidate out to dinner, at separate times, and informally encourage the candidates to imbibe enough spirits (alcohol) so that each would be uninhibited and speak freely. They might then compare the candidates two emic presentations from their etic perceptions. Again, such an emic-etic interaction may be an example of the observer taking unfair advantage of the informants. The same purposes might be more ethically accomplished by inviting both candidates to meet and interact with the parents, teachers, students, and the taxpayers of a school district and comparing and contrasting performances in these multiple interactions.

Research Potential

While the emic and etic framework seems to make some intuitive sense

in terms of understanding certain aspects of experience in educational organizations, the framework may have the potential to contribute to inquiry (particularly inductive inquiry) and theory building in educational administration. The classic observer - informant relationship characterized by emic-etic methodology is very similar to inductive methodologies employed to study a junior high school organization (Willower, 1968), student subcultures (Cusick 1973; and Bunrett, 1969), the principalship (Wolcott, 1973; Greenfield and Blumberg, 1980) or teaching as a profession (Lortie, 1975). In each case, the inductive procedures used observation, interviews, document analysis and other data gathering techniques to produce fields of specific observations from which generalizations were derived to explain social phenomena. With certain variation, the observers viewed the social context from the etic perspective and information from informants or system participants as being reflective of emic perceptions.

Figure 1 shows that the emic-etic can present a relatively comprehensive combination of observer-informant data collection relationships. For instance, the observer can pose questions or collect data from an etic or an emic perspective. The observer could initiate inquiry from the classic etic (external or scientific observer) stance or share his personal emic with the natives or informants, possibly as a part of certain cross-cultural exchanges or comparisons. The informant can respond from an emic perspective, and in those cases where the informant is familiar with the tenets of science, the informant can respond from an etic perspective. Keeping these various perspectives in mind, four types of analysis are possible: etic/emic (the classic mode used by social researchers), etic/etic, emic/emic, and emic/etic. It should be noted that these names of analysis types present the

observer perspective first, the informant perspective second.

(figure 1 goes about here)

Although several inquiry modes such as historical or contemporary document analysis, survey methods, or participant observation may employ specific analysis types noted in figure 1, the most obvious adaptation of emic and etic inquiry would probably be interviews between investigators in the field and native informants. For illustrative purposes, let's use an interview method targeted as a research tool in exploring a principal (school administrator) subculture in a particular school district as an example of how the emic and etic framework can guide the interviews of principals (natives). In this example, we shall assume the investigators are employing an unstructured schedule interview, i. e., specific interview questions, but the interviewer is not restricted to only questions on the interview form in determining the actual meaning of the respondents' answers (Denzin, 1970). Discussion of this example will focus on the four analysis types and their meanings noted in figure 1 and their relationship to specific interview questions. The specification of the four informant/observer relations to the study of the principals informal system follows:

a. Etic/Emic - the investigator (Etic) is asking the principal (Emic) how a phenomenon is perceived from the perspective of the principal as a native. The question might be phrased by saying, "Tell me how, by what means, do you interact informally with other principals or peers?"

b. Etic/Etic (cross etic) - the investigator (Etic) is asking the principal (Etic) to step out of his role and speak from an objective external observer's perspective. The question might be phrased, "As an objective external observer, tell me how you would

view the means by which informal interaction takes place between and among principals in your system?

c. Emic/Emic (cross emic) - the investigator (Emic) describes the phenomenon in his system as it is perceived from his own perspective as a native. The principal (Emic) might be asked to respond to the same phenomenon from his position as a native. The question might be posited, "As a member of this research team, the means by which I informally interact with other team members are by telephone, chance meetings, and eating together. How does that compare with the way you interact with your fellow principals?"

d. Emic/Etic - the investigator (Emic) describes the phenomenon in his system as it is perceived from his own perspective as a native. The principal (Etic) steps out of his native role and speaks from an objective external perspective. The question might be posited, "The means by which I informally interact with other members of this research team are by telephone, chance meetings, and eating together. As an external observer, how would you describe these means by which informal interaction takes place between and among the research team members that I described?"

These four types of emic and etic analyses are informant/observer relationships might be used to develop an entire interview form. Figure 2 presents two sets of questions from an interview form which employs seven such sets targeted for interviews by a graduate student researcher with urban principals about their informal system (Johnson, 1981). Three terms seem important in organizing such an interview form: set title, interview set,

and question.

(figure 2 goes about here)

A set is a group of four questions: an etic/emic question, an etic/etic question, an emic/emic question, and an emic/etic question. A set focuses on a specific content noted by the set title. A question operationalizes a particular emic and etic analysis type within a set by presenting the informant with an interrogative stimulus. For instance, in figure 2, Set II is entitled INHIBITORS OF INFORMAL INTERACTION and is composed of four interview questions. Set III is entitled MEANS OF INFORMAL INTERACTION and is also composed of four interview questions. In each case the set title notes the focus of the questioning. All four questions within each set will be presented in the interview. The set number is always a whole integer; the etic/emic question is always .1; the emic/emic is always .2; the etic/etic question is always .3; and the emic/etic question is always .4. In figure 2, question 2.1, "Tell me, what factors would inhibit informal exchange of information between principals over administrative situations?," is part of Set II and is the etic/emic question for that set. The question, "In my position as a graduate student, I communicate informally with my peer group after class or at planned informal social gatherings, e.g., the pizza parlor. How would you describe this action as a principal?," is numbered 3.3. This means that it is the emic/emic question from Set III. This pattern is repeated throughout all sets on the interview schedule or form.

Data Analysis

In descriptive or inductive inquiry, the various questions provide specific observations or data for generalization. Data from a particular question can be naturally clustered or classified based on patterns of

similarity between and among responses to a particular question. While relationships between specific units of data and generalization are often intimate but sometimes unclear (Denzin, 1970), moving back and forth conceptually from the relatively specific to the relatively general is key to the process of analytic induction. The basic criterion by which any generalization is judged is its ability to show natural congruence with the scope of its specific indicators (Zetterberg). The result of this process for theory building is sometimes a social definition, a taxonomy, a hypothesis, or central explanatory theme.

The process of inductive data analysis must be systematic and involve rigorous cross-checking between those doing the analysis. In the past, this process involved analysis of standard etic/emic type responses. The use of a set of four questions, each from a different informant perspective (etic/emic, etic/etic, emic/emic or emic/etic), complicates the analysis. As a result of the emic and etic framework, intraquestion and interquestion analysis seem appropriate. Analysis is always done from the etic perspective.

Figure 3 presents a diagram of intraquestion analysis. Let's assume that 30 principals in the inquiry noted above responded to question 1.1. Their 30 responses would provide a data field for analysis. Taking care not to force clusters or classes of data, the researchers might produce certain subgeneralization(s) at a particular level of abstraction. In cases where a series of subgeneralizations emerge, researchers must make a decision about whether or not it is fruitful to generalize these to an even higher level of abstraction. Of course, this within question data analysis may not always produce generalization. From the point of view of these authors, generalization should be avoided unless it can be naturally inducted from the data. This intraquestion analysis would be repeated for

all individual questions in all sets in an interview schedule.

(figure 3 goes about here)

Interquestion analysis focuses on possible generalization that can be appropriately derived from the subgeneralization or generalizations produced from intraquestion analyses of the four questions within a particular set. Figure 4 presents a diagram of such analysis employed in the study of principals noted above. In this example, subgeneralizations from principal's responses to questions 1.1 through 1.4 are compared and contrasted to produce a more comprehensive explanatory theme, particularly in those cases where such a theme would be both naturally derived and theoretically fruitful. Interquestion analysis is conducted at a higher level of abstraction than intraquestion analysis. If both intra and interquestion analysis were initiated at the same (relatively specific) levels of abstraction, the interquestion data field would be relatively large and burdensome, e.g., for 30 principals times 4 questions, the data field for a particular set would be 120 responses. While such an analyses pattern is available, there is doubt that this pattern would produce anything substantially different than the comparisons of the generalizations produced from intraquestion analyses within a specific set.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to associate and apply the anthropological framework of emic and etic analyses to educational administration, particularly inquiry in educational administration. Given an observer/informant relationship, emic operations make the informant or native the judge of the adequacy of the oberver's descriptions; etic operations make the external observer the judge of the adequacy of descriptions or generalizations

derived from data analyses. The authors suggested applications of the emic and etic framework to both everyday life in administration and as a guide to research in educational organizations. Using the unstructured interview applied to a study of a school principals' informal system as an example, the authors identified four analyses types that characterize informant/observer relationships: etic/emic, etic/etic, emic/emic and emic/etic. These types were operationalized through specific interview questions posed in sets of four questions per set. Inductive analysis patterns involved both within question analyses and between question analyses as a means to theory building in educational administration.

It is probably important to keep in mind that this paper sought only to suggest and explore some possible applications of emic and etic analysis to inquiry in educational administration. It was not a presentation of an interview methodology. Interviewing was used only as an example of possible application. Certainly other applications may be possible and fruitful. When one realizes that most past, and present inquires in educational administration focus almost solely on what has been called here etic/emic analysis, the question of whether or not the addition of etic/etic, emic/emic or emic/etic analyses would substantionally contribute to our knowledge of educational organizations is an interesting one.

It must also be acknowledged that within an individual, observer or informant, it is difficult to determine where one's etic leaves off and one's emic begins. Pilot tests with the interview procedure noted above suggested that some informants feel uneasy about moving back and forth from the role of native (emic) to external observer (etic). The key problem seemed to be involved with how much "baggage" or native experience an informant should bring with him in responding as an external observer.

Perhaps such role reversals, switching from emic to etic or visa versa by observer and informant is unnecessary, cumbersome and unfruitful. On the other hand, there may be ways this can be managed so that the value of the cross checks provided by these four analyses types may in some situations make such emic and etic efforts worthwhile.

Further cautions and limitations need to be emphasized. The use of all four emic and etic analyses types are only possible when informants are aware of the tenets of science. While this limitation is not necessarily a problem in research with professional educators and certain other adult respondents, etic/etic and emic/etic are probably not very useful analysis types with certain student groups. Since each set focus on title requires four questions, it probably would not be a method used by interviewers who need to address numerous items of focus or inquiry. Understanging these limitations and others mentioned above, emic and etic frameworks may be worth exploring as at least one of many modes of inquiry in educational administration. Recall, our purpose was not to "sell" the notion of emic and etic analysis, but simply to present it as an item we might want to explore, an item which in some situations may be useful in understanding educational organizations, how they are perceived and how they change.

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Figure 1. Emic and Etic Analysis Observer/Informant Relationships

Observer Perspective	Informant Perspective	Type of Analysis	Interpretation (meaning)	Research Question
Etic	Emic	Etic/Emic	The investigator (Etic) is asking the informant (Emic) how a phenomenon is perceived from the perspective of the native.	Tell me how you interpret the phenomenon as a native? (Classic type)
	Etic	Etic/Etic (cross Etic)	The investigator (Etic) is asking the informant (Etic) to step out of his role and speak from an objective external observer's perspective.	Tell me how you view this phenomenon as a fellow scientist (native provides objective external observer discourse)?
Emic	Emic	Emic/Emic (cross Emic)	The investigator (Emic) describes the phenomenon as it is perceived from his own perspective as a native. Next, the informant is asked to respond to the same phenomenon from his/her position as a native.	In my culture or experiential base we view it this way; how would you compare/contrast this from your cultural or experiential base?
	Etic	Emic/Etic	The investigator (Emic) describes the phenomenon as it is perceived from one's own perspective as a native. Next, the informant (Etic) steps out of that role and speaks from an objective observer perspective.	In my culture or experiential base we view it this way; how do you view this as a fellow scientist (informant) provides objective external observe discourse?

Figure 2. Sample Sets of Questions from an Interview Form Based on the Emic and Etic Framework

Set II INHIBITORS OF INFORMAL INTERACTION

2.1 Tell me, what factors would inhibit informal exchange of information between principals over administrative situations? (Etic/Emic)

2.2 Tell me, as an objective external observer, what factors would you say inhibit informal exchange of information between principals over administrative situations? (Etic/Etic)

2.3 In my position as a graduate student, I tend not to seek counsel from persons who credibility is in question. How would you describe this position as a principal? (Emic/Emic)

2.4 In my position as a graduate student, I tend not to seek counsel from persons whose credibility is in question. How would you describe this as an objective external observer? (Emic/Etic)

Set III MEANS OF INFORMAL INTERACTION

3.1 Tell me, what means or structure do you use in communicating informally with peers? (Etic/Emic)

3.2 Tell me, as an objective external observer, how do you describe the means by which this informal communication takes place? (Etic/Etic)

3.3 In my position as a graduate student, I communicate informally with my peer group after class or at planned informal social gatherings, e.g., the pizza parlor. How would you describe this action as a principal? (Emic/Emic)

3.4 In my position as a graduate student, I communicate informally with my peer group after class or at planned informal social gatherings, e.g., the pizza parlor. How would you describe this position as an objective external observer? (Emic/Etic)

Figure 3. Intraquestion Analysis for Question 1.1*

Principal					
1	Interview	Set I			
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 1		
2	Interview	Set I		Subgeneralization	
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 2		
3	Interview	Set I		Subgeneralization	
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 3		
4	Interview	Set I			
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 4		
5	Interview	Set I		Subgeneralization	
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 5		Generalization(s)
6	Interview	Set I			
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 6		
7	Interview	Set I		Subgeneralization	
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 7		
↓					
30	Interview	Set I			
	Question	1.1	response of Principal 30		

* The same sequence is followed for each question in the various interview sets.

Figure 4. Interquestion Analysis for Set I

Principals	Interview Set I		
1 - 30	Question 1.1	Subgeneralization(s) from 1.1	
	Question 1.2	Subgeneralizations(s) from 1.2	Theme or Generalization(s)
	Question 1.3	Subgeneralization(s) from 1.3	
	Question 1.4	Subgeneralization(s) from 1.4	